



MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**OVER 100 DIVERS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL FISH COUNT AND
STELLWAGEN BANK SANCTUARY CELEBRATION IN GLOUCESTER**

The waters around Cape Ann will be filled with divers on July 16 as part of the Great Annual Fish Count and Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Celebration. The Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center will serve as the event's headquarters.

WHAT: Great Annual Fish Count and Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Celebration

WHEN: Saturday, July 16, 2005
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center
23 Harbor Loop
Gloucester, Mass.

BACKGROUND:

This is expected to be the largest one-day dive event associated with the Great Annual Fish Count, an international program organized through the Reef Environmental Education Program and supported by NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program. Last year 84 divers spotted more than 40 species of fish in local waters. This year the sanctuary expects over 100 participants from dive clubs throughout New England.

By recording the types and numbers of fish, divers contribute to a massive database that provides insight into the range of species, local populations, and builds greater public awareness of local marine biodiversity. The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Celebration at the Maritime Heritage Center will include exhibits about sanctuary resources and research, including shipwrecks, whales and seafloor habitats. Hands-on activities for children and adults will be offered from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center will be free for the day for divers.